I³M

INTEREST.
IDENTIFICATION.
INDOCTRINATION.
MOBILIZATION.

A SHORT INTRODUCTION TO A NEW MODEL OF INSURGENT INVOLVEMENT[1]
BY JESSE KIRKPATRICK AND MARY KATE SCHNEIDER

Introduction

Recruitment propaganda is one of the main ways through which insurgencies and other extremist movements spread their message and recruit and indoctrinate new members. Insurgent movements have long used recruitment videos, capitalizing on the Internet's ability to reach audiences far and wide at minimal cost. Sites such as YouTube are littered with manifestos and training footage, broadcasting the ideologies of these groups to people around the world in places as diverse as Nigeria, Syria and the United States. This is not to suggest, however, that mere exposure to such messages will always yield active followers; not all consumers of revolutionary messages will act on them. What we do not yet fully understand is the panoply of factors leading up to an individual's decision to join an insurgency and mobilize to violence.

In support of the Assessing Revolutionary and Insurgent Strategies project, researchers from the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab and United States Army Special Operations Command, G3 Special Programs Division attempted to fill this gap in knowledge. As part of this contribution, the research team developed a new model of insurgent participation and involvement that focuses on four critical areas: interest, identification, indoctrination and mobilization.[2] Dubbed "I³M," the model attempts to streamline previous efforts within the literature and delineate the factors leading up to and including insurgent mobilization. Both easily taught and learned, the model is also objective, normatively neutral and may be applied across a range of insurgency cases.

This article serves as a short introduction to the I³M model and will proceed in three parts. First, it unpacks the I³M model, defining and explicating its components. It then explains the framework's importance and notes its advantages over other models. Finally, it concludes with a suggestion for future research.

I³M: Explaining the Model

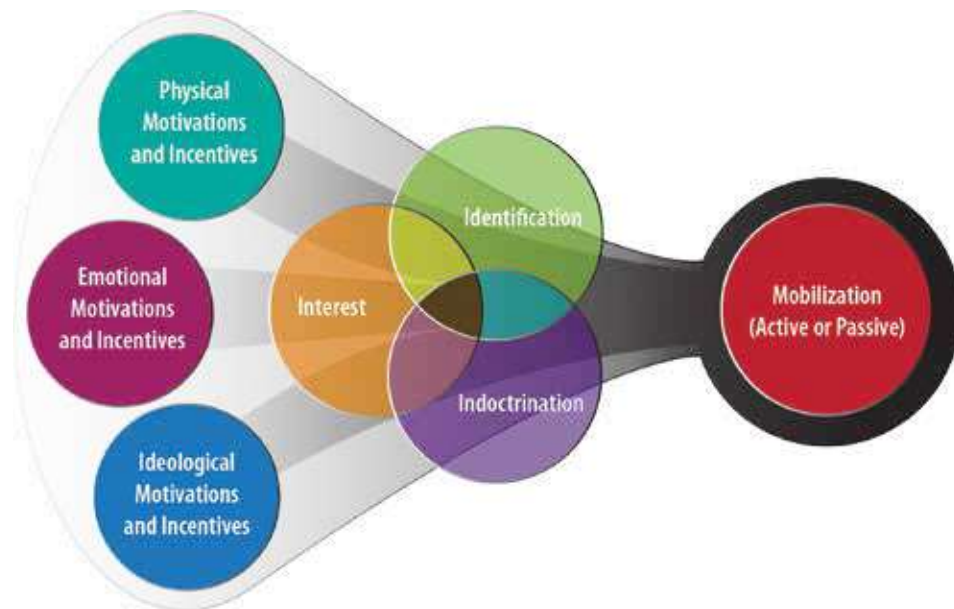I³M is a two-part model. The first part encapsulates four key behavioral processes

DIAGRAM 1 I³M model part one encapsulates the four key behavioral processes of insurgency involvement.

of insurgency involvement. These include: interest (What piques the curiosity of new recruits?); identification (What leads new recruits to associate themselves with the movement?); indoctrination (What causes new recruits to take the leap and actually join the movement?); and mobilization (The point at which individuals take action in support of the movement). Interest, identification and indoctrination are the three factors leading up to mobilization.

As Diagram 1 indicates, while the components of I³M are interconnected, the processes are not linear — there is no simple, universal path by which individuals decide to mobilize.[3] More importantly, although some individuals may be susceptible to the message of an insurgency, the vast majority will not adopt that insurgency's ideology to such an extent that they take action on its behalf. For those who do take an interest or identify with an insurgency, few will actually undergo indoctrination and mobilization. This characteristic raises an interesting question: What, then, motivates or incentivizes individuals to engage multiple aspects of I³M and become involved in an insurgency?

Here one can turn to the second part of the I³M model. Where the first part of I³M lays out four key factors of individual involvement in insurgencies, the second part of the model identifies some general

motivations and incentives for why individuals embark on and take steps in the I³M process. In identifying these motivations and incentives, the team drew from the empirical work of numerous insurgency scholars who have developed typologies and models that outline contributing factors to insurgent motivation — these factors assist in explaining why certain individuals might take an interest in an insurgency's ideology and why those individuals might identify with an insurgency.[4] Further, these factors can be used to explain the process through which individuals become indoctrinated and eventually mobilized.[5]

Diagram 2 depicts the division of motivations and incentives into three categories: emotional, physical and ideological. It further demonstrates how we have delineated the motivations and incentives for I³M within each of these categories.[6] We should note that while it is a useful heuristic to theorize and treat these categories and their attendant motivators as discrete and separable, in reality, the motivations and incentives influencing interest, identification, indoctrination and mobilization that we have identified can be cross-categorized. For example, a necessary condition of relative deprivation is that not only must external physical conditions of deprivation be present, but there must also be internal feelings, perceptions or ob-
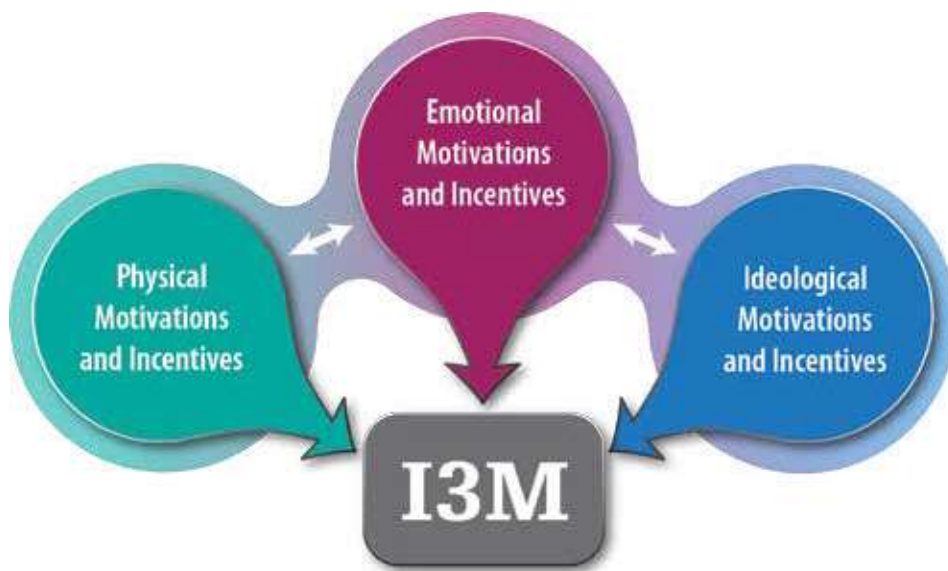
servations of the deprivation. In this sense, although we categorize relative deprivation as a physical motivation and incentive, it is both physical *and* emotional; it is in this way that the categorizations are, admittedly, not entirely separable.

In addition to defying discrete categorization, just like incentives and motivations for life's other activities, individuals' motivations and incentives for I³M are pluralistic. An individual may be interested in an insurgency for a variety of reasons, perhaps because of religious and political beliefs and also because of social pressure. Motivations and incentives are complex drivers of and contributors to behavior; individuals are typically influenced by numerous motives, which are further impacted by additional factors such as environment, social conditions, life history and so forth. Not only can one can be influenced by a multiplicity of motivators and incentives, these attributes vary in strength and intensity from individual to individual.

While there is no magic formula that will predict what will motivate and incentivize a person to engage in I³M, once the interest of an individual has been piqued, it becomes possible for the individual to identify with the insurgency, become receptive to indoctrination and ultimately mobilize. By isolating the factors that contribute to

I³M, we can begin to operationalize the concept in a way that capitalizes on the model's explanatory and analytic power. Through querying a given case for the presence of the above listed factors, we are able to better understand the reasons why an insurgency is able to grow in membership and succeed (or fail) in its actions.

Moving the Model Forward: The Merits of I³M

The I³M model offers numerous advantages over other models. It is important to note that while I³M builds upon existing research on insurgencies and revolutions, it also departs from this scholarship in important and productive ways. While much of the existing scholarship on insurgency tends to focus on radicalization, especially radicalization to violence, our model seeks to explicate the steps leading up to and encompassing the act of insurgent mobilization, while also focusing on the broader incentives and motivations for why individuals take steps in the process of I³M.[7] As a result, our operative research questions focus upon the more expansive issues of interest, identification, indoctrination and mobilization in an insurgency and are, therefore, not limited to inquiries solely focusing on radicalization.

In addition to creating a broader base for research and inquiry, the I³M model has

the obvious advantage of being applicable to insurgents and insurgencies that are not radical.[8] This applicability results from an obvious but striking fact: involvement in an insurgency need not require radicalization — one can become an insurgent without being radicalized. Insurgents may be motivated by factors that have little or nothing to do with root or fundamental change — a key component of radicalization.[9] For example, insurgents may fight to maintain the status quo or for material benefits. We have seen this latter motivation in the case of groups like the Self-Defense Forces of Colombia whose members were motivated by material incentives, the acquisition of wealth and greater shares of Colombia's illicit drug market, and not in radical, fundamental change. Because I³M casts a comparatively wider net, it offers a model that is applicable to numerous types of insurgents and insurgencies, and can help identify and explain the motivations and interests of actors ranging from the radical jihadist to the right-wing neo-Nazi to the insurgent fighting to preserve the status quo.

A second advantage of I³M results from the fact that it was developed to be of use to both scholars and students of insurgencies alike. As part of the ARIS Project, the I³M model will constitute the core component of an ARIS Instructors' Portal lesson plan, a resource for instructors who are teaching about insurgency recruitment and indoctrination. This is one reason why the team strove to develop an intuitive and easily understandable model, attributes essential to teaching and learning the complexities of insurgencies.

Third, I³M presents a set of four stages that are straightforward and, frankly, easier to recall and remember than existing insurgency recruitment and indoctrination models.[10] We can think of the model as akin to a chest of drawers, a clothing bureau, where each of the "drawers" (i.e., processes in the model) can be opened and expanded as needed. From a teaching and learning perspective, it is far easier to remember and think about a general category (say, a sock drawer) that can be expanded and further specified, than it is to recall all of the various things that fall under that category. Which

MEETING NEEDS Often insurgents will fight to maintain the status quo or for material benefits. When those material benefits are not forthcoming, insurgents may put down their arms, like these Taliban insurgents turned who themselves in to Afghan National Security Forces. Their defections came in the midst of an Afghan-led operation designed to defeat the insurgency, provide humanitarian supplies and enable development projects in the area. *DoD photo.*

is easier to remember, four general categories of drawers or all of their constituent contents? By using four steps, I³M offers a heuristic that is advantageous for teaching and learning; it enables quick conceptual fluency for today's student of insurgency.

While the I³M model provides a good teaching heuristic, it also retains complexity and nuance — the model is simplified

nosis, insurgencies can only be defeated or supported when we understand the factors that motivate and incentivize insurgents.

Perhaps most importantly, I³M lays a strong foundation for further research. It signals that while there is good existing scholarship on the topic, there remains much work to be done. In the end, I³M remains a preliminary model that is need

do not sacrifice nuance at the cost of being straightforward. The four steps in the I³M model, coupled with the motivations and incentives that help explain why individuals take part in I³M, cast a comparatively wider net than existing insurgency scholarship which tends to focus upon radicalization. As educators and research scholars ourselves, we have worked to create a model

> "Involvement in an insurgency need not require radicalization — one can become an insurgent without being radicalized."

but not simplistic. In this respect, I³M has significant explanatory power. Just like the chest of drawers, each of I³M's categories can be expanded or "opened" to display a more complex set of variables that we have identified in the insurgency process. The identification of root motivations and incentives that impel individuals to become insurgents is advantageous not only for teachers and students, but also for today's war planner and fighter. Just like in medicine, where illness can only be cured with a proper diag-

of further exploration and study, a task that researchers on the ARIS Project are committed to fulfilling.

Conclusion

In summary, I³M is a novel model that offers several advantages over existing models of insurgent activity. Whereas other models rely on numerous steps and substeps to help explain behavior, our model is condensed into four stages that can be expanded or collapsed as needed. Thus, we

that is of use to students, teachers, academics and practitioners. As a result, because the I³M model is straightforward and easily comprehensible (factors that are critical to teaching, learning and operationalizing), it provides an improved basis for teaching about insurgency without compromising complexity. It is in this way that I³M provides a good heuristic for inquiring about a more nuanced and complex set of variables that can help inform the tactics and strategies of today's warfighter.

In closing, it is important to note that we do not wish to pretend that developing a general model of insurgent interest, identification, indoctrination and mobilization is an easy task; it is not. Nor do we claim that the I³M model provides an exhaustive, reductive account of insurgent motivation; to do so would be disingenuous. But it is possible to make headway by establishing a conceptual framework based upon the best empirical data available; this is what I³M strives to achieve. And while I³M helps us peel back the complexities of the study of insurgencies, it also reminds us how far this scholarship has to go. I³M not only underscores the need for conducting further research, it also provides a critical path to do so. **SW**

Dr. Jesse Kirkpatrick is a social science research analyst at Johns Hopkins University - Applied Physics Lab and a resident research fellow at the US Naval Academy's Stockdale Center for Ethical Leadership, where he conducts research on the ethics of war and peace. A political and moral philosopher by training, Dr. Kirkpatrick completed graduate studies at American University and earned his PhD in political science from the University of Maryland. His research and teaching focuses on just war theory, human rights and the history of political thought. He has conducted field research in Israel, the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Lebanon. Dr. Kirkpatrick's most recent work examines the ethical demands that occur in post-conflict environments.

Mary Kate Schneider is a Social Science Research Analyst at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab. A Ph.D. candidate in government and politics at the University of Maryland, College Park. Her research focuses on ethnic conflict and nationalist movements. Schneider is a 2013-14 Fulbright Fellow to Bosnia-Herzegovina and has conducted field research throughout the Western Balkans. She holds an MA in political science from Lehigh University in Bethlehem, PA as well as bachelor's degrees in political science and psychology from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania in Kutztown, Penn.

Notes

1. The authors wish to thank Bruce DeFeyter, Christina Phillips, Max Crownover, and Maegen Nix for their instructive comments, criticisms, and contributions. Any errors are the authors' own. Special thanks to Magda Saina, Art Director at Johns Hopkins University--Applied Physics Laboratory, for creating Diagram One.

2. The original developers of the I³M model are Bruce DeFeyter and Christina Phillips, with subsequent developmental contributions made by this article's authors.

3. In fact, we agree with critics who argue against models that purport "contrary to empirical social science studies, that the path to terrorism has a fixed trajectory and that each step of the process has specific, identifiable markers," especially those that focus on attempting to identify markers based upon religious affiliation. Patel, Faiza. 2011. "Rethinking Radicalization," Brennan Center for Justice, New York University School of Law. p.1.

4. See Crenshaw, Martha. July 1981. "The Causes of Terrorism," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 13, No. 4, 379-399.; Hoffman, Bruce. 1998. Inside Terrorism. New York: Columbia University Press.; Berman, Eli. 2009. Radical, Religious, and Right: The New Economics of Terrorism. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.; Hegghammer, Thomas. Winter 2006. "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia," Middle East Policy, Vol. 8, No. 4, 39-60.; Jones, James W. 2008. Blood That Cries Out From the Earth: The Psychology of Religious Terrorism. Oxford: Oxford University Press.; McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2011. Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us. Oxford: Oxford University Press.; McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2008. "Mechanisms of Political Radicalization: Pathways toward Terrorism," Terrorism and Political Violence, Vol. 20, No. 3, 415-433.; Patel, Faiza. 2011. "Rethinking Radicalization," Brennan Center for Justice, New York University School of Law.; Wintrobe, Ronald. 2006. Rational Extremism: The Political Economy of Radicalism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. For those individuals who do mobilize, some may do so in ways in which they do not themselves directly participate in violent activity. Here it is helpful to distinguish between passive and active mobilization. Passive mobilization can be characterized by activity that falls short of the taking up of arms but includes actions on behalf or in support of an insurgency. Some representative activities of passive mobilization include charitable contributions to insurgent organizations or allowing armed individuals to take shelter on one's property. Conversely, active mobilization is when one takes direct part in the armed activities of the insurgency, when one is, in effect, an actively armed insurgent. Thanks to Bruce DeFeyter for pushing us on this distinction. For a discussion of the elements of an insurgency and the various kinds of mobilization and participation see Chuck Crossett, (ed.) Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare Vol. II: 1962-2009, United States Army Special Operations Command and the Johns Hopkins University/Applied Physics Laboratory National Security Analysis Department. *passim*.

6. Some scholars of radicalization have disaggregated "mechanisms" of political radicalization based upon the amount of individuals involved. These authors distinguish between the individual, group, and mass levels, identifying mechanisms such as polarization (typically a result of discussion or exchange of ideas in closed environments, this occurs when there is a collective shift to more and more extreme directions as a byproduct of groupthink); competition (with other groups and/or with the state); isolation (when a movement 'goes underground,' either by choice or because it is forced); jiu jitsu politics (a strategy that aims to use an opponent's strength against him). McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2011. Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us. Oxford: Oxford University Press. passim. While some of these mechanisms may overlap with our model's individual motivations and incentives, I³M generally applies to the individual level. For a defense of this individual-oriented approach see Hegghammer, Thomas. Winter 2006. "Terrorist Recruitment and Radicalization in Saudi Arabia," Middle East Policy, Vol. 8, No. 4, 39-60. It is our belief that further I³M research should examine motivations and incentives at these larger, macro-levels.

7. See note 4 for a representative sample of this scholarship on radicalization.

8. Radical is here defined as "associated with political views, practices, and policies of extreme change." "Radical" as defined by Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed August 5, 2013. http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/radical. Others define radicalization as "beliefs, feelings, and actions in support of any group or cause in conflict." McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2011. Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 4. While the latter definition removes the association with extreme change, such radicalization models require the three parts of "belief, feelings, *and* actions," whereas, the I³M model has the advantage of encompassing a wider range of individual steps toward involvement in an insurgency. Ibid.

9. Thanks to Ted Plettner for pressing us on this point and providing the example of some *Salafi* Muslims who may engage in insurgent activity, yet remain uninterested in political change. For a similar example see McCauley, Clark and Sophia Moskalenko. 2011. Friction: How Radicalization Happens to Them and Us. Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 5.

10. While the number of "chunks" that most people can remember is a matter of dispute, research in experimental psychology indicates that short term memory has a capacity limit. See Miller, G. A. (1956). "The magical number seven, plus or minus two: Some limits on our capacity for processing information". Psychological Review 63 (2): 81–97. For a critique of Miller see, Cowan, Nelson (2000). "The magical number 4 in short-term memory: A reconsideration of mental storage capacity". Behavioral and Brain Sciences 24 (1): 87–185.